

Arcuri-Hall Amendment Passes House Unanimously on Voice Vote

Washington, DC - The U.S. House of Representatives passed an amendment late Tuesday afternoon, supported by Rep. John Hall (NY-19), that would have the effect of impeding efforts to construct the proposed New York Regional Interconnect Project (NYRI) in Orange County and New York's Southern Tier. The amendment, introduced by U.S. Rep. Michael Arcuri (NY-24), requires the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the Secretary of Transportation, to study the security risks of placing High Voltage DC power lines, like those of the proposed NYRI project, along railroad tracks.

Rep. Hall spoke on the House floor, urging his colleagues to support the amendment. The amendment eventually passed unanimously by voice vote and was incorporated into H.R. 1401, The Rail and Public Transportation Security Act of 2007. The legislation will be considered next by the U.S. Senate.

An excerpt from Congressman Hall's remarks on the floor follows:

Statement of Rep. John Hall

Amendment to H.R. 1401

March 27, 2007 "I thank my colleague from New York, Congressman Arcuri, for offering this important amendment and am honored to speak in support of it. "America's railways and power lines are key critical infrastructure, so when proposals would locate them together it only makes sense for DHS and DOT to give them serious scrutiny.

"In the State of New York, the homeland security stakes are particularly high. Yet a private company continues to pursue eminent domain authority to install the massive New York Regional Interconnect along rail routes, through environmentally sensitive areas, and over the objections of local residents.

"In their hurry to get NYRI up and running, the company has pushed forward a plan that would put a 1200 megawatt line on 135 foot towers near numerous rail lines. In Western New York there have been 19 derailments since 2005. The potential recipe for disaster is clear here.

"There's also a matter of precedent that this amendment would help to clarify. By passing this amendment this body can say that in projects in New York and around the country that we will not endorse private, for-profit projects above the security of our citizens, the sanctity of our environment, or the rights of our landowners.

"I urge my colleagues to support this amendment."

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